

Thomas Jefferson to Pierre S. Dupont de Nemours, July 14, 1807, The Works of Thomas Jefferson in Twelve Volumes. Federal Edition. Collected and Edited by Paul Leicester Ford.

TO DUPONT DE NEMOURS J. MSS.

Washington, July 14, 1807.

My Dear Sir, —I received last night your letter of May 6, and a vessel being just now sailing from Baltimore, affords me an opportunity of hastily acknowledging it. Your exhortation to make a provision of arms is undoubtedly wise, and we have not been inattentive to it. Our internal resources for cannon are great, and those for small arms considerable, & in full employment. We shall not suffer from that want should we have war; and of the possibility of that you will judge by the enclosed proclamation, & by what you know of the character of the English government. Never since the battle of Lexington have I seen this country in such a state of exasperation as at present, and even that did not produce such unanimity. The federalists themselves coalesce with us as to the object, tho' they will return to their trade of censuring every measure taken to obtain it. "Reparation for the past, and security for the future," is our motto; but whether they will yield it freely, or will require resort to non-intercourse, or to war, is yet to be seen. We prepare for the last. We have actually 2,000 men in the field, employed chiefly in covering the exposed coast, & cutting off all supply to the British vessels. We think our gun-boats at New York, (32,) with heavy batteries along shore, & bombs, will put that city *hors d'insulte*. If you could procure & send me a good description & drawing of one of your Prames, you would do me a most acceptable service. I suppose them to be in fact a floating battery, rendered very manageable by oars.

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Burr's conspiracy has been one of the most flagitious of which history will ever furnish an example. He had combined the objects of separating the western States from us, of adding Mexico to them, and of placing himself at their head. But he who could expect to effect such objects by the aid of American citizens, must be perfectly ripe for Bedlam. Yet altho' there is not a man in the U. S. who is not satisfied

of the depth of his guilt, such are the jealous provisions of our laws in favor of the accused, & against the accuser, that I question if he can be convicted. Out of 48 jurors who are to be summoned, he has a right to choose the 12 who are to try him, and if any one of the 12 refuses to concur in finding him guilty, he escapes. This affair has been a great confirmation in my mind of the innate strength of the form of our government. He had probably induced near a thousand men to engage with him, by making them believe the government connived at it. A proclamation alone, by undeceiving them, so compleatly disarmed him, that he had not above 30 men left, ready to go all lengths with him. The first enterprise was to have been the seizure of N. Orleans, which he supposed would powerfully bridle the country above, & place him at the door of Mexico. It has given me infinite satisfaction that not a single native Creole of Louisiana, and but one American, settled there before the delivery of the country to us, were in his interest. His partisans there were made up of fugitives from justice, or from their debts, who had flocked there from other parts of the U. S., after the delivery of the country, and of adventurers & speculators of all descriptions. I thank you for the volume of *Memoirs* you have sent me, & will immediately deliver that for the Phil. Society. I feel a great interest in the publication of Turgot's works, but quite as much in your return here. Your Eleutherian son is very valuable to us, & will daily become more so. I hope there will be a reaction of good offices on him. We have heard of a great improvement in France of the furnace for heating cannon-balls, but we can get no description of it.

I salute you with sincere affection, & add assurances of the highest respect.